



June 25, 2015 Minutes

Present: Amber Alexander, Terry Allebaugh, Rudy Baker, Archie Barrow, Sue Bennett, Helaine Bilos, Michael Bishop, Andrew Blizzard, Brenda Brubaker, Erica Buckley, Fain Buente, Terry Cain, Ray Cerda, Jennifer Chauncey, Will Collins, Trina Condit, Bess Corriveau, Dr. Eric Crawford, Kelli Davis, Hank Debnam, Bridget DeLacy, Donna Dennis, Johnny Dwiggin, Pat Fitzgerald, Bryan Fox, Bob Goodale, Kathryn Hare, Judy Harmon, Angela Harper, James Hicks, Dr. Robin Hurley, Victoria Johanningsmeier, Wilson Lester, Heather McAllister, Enrique McClymont, Dr. George Millsaps, Brenda Monforti, Patrick Murtha, Terry Nichols, Stephanie Nissen, Ilario Pantano, Cheryl Rawls, Michael Robinson, Dr. Lisa Sacco, Austen Shearer, Betty Jo Shephard, Jeff Smith, Tony Sowards, Richard Stancel, Flo Stein, Robert Tabares, Eric Truesdale, Brian Volk, Dr. Joe Wescott, Teresa West, Kristina Wilhelmson, GEN Cornell Wilson, Kyle Winder, and Julia Ziegler

During the introductions, Mr. Pantano stated that NC Division of Veterans Affairs is organizing an Expo for Women Veterans in 2016. Teresa West and Terry Cain are the points of contact for this initiative.

On June 24, Governor McCrory signed a bill granting in-state tuition for all Veterans in North Carolina. Members of the General Assembly as well as some of those in the audience attended the event. GEN Wilson thanked Dr. Wescott for his efforts on behalf of this bill.

After everyone introduced themselves, GEN Wilson mentioned that they are following BRAC developments closely. NC has 40,000 soldiers around the world. He welcomed the speakers and attendees. He also noted that Wake Forest University recently received a research grant to study TBI.

Mr. Pantano said that there is now an app available for NC4VETS and that users can identify resources in their area.

Ms. Rawls introduced Dr. Hurley, who is a well-known researcher in traumatic brain injury with over 90 publications. She works at the Salisbury VAMC and the VISN 6 MIRECC but has a joint appointment with Wake Forest University. She spoke on the *Neuropsychiatry of TBI: Current Understanding and Future Challenges*. First she introduced the neuroanatomy of the brain and the importance of brain circuitry in traumatic brain injury. The frontal cortex controls functions such as emotion, behavior, and memory. The most common injuries are to the dorsal lateral prefrontal cortex, with a subdural bleed; contusions; and diffuse axonal injuries. Sensorineural losses occur, with problems related to vision, headaches, hearing, and vertigo. Co-morbidities include personality change, cognitive impairment, depression, substance abuse, PTSD, anxiety, sleep disturbances, aggression, and memory loss. The greater the concussion, the worse the PTSD. TBI, PTSD, and SUD co-occur and need to be treated together. Individuals can recover and can benefit from evidence-based therapies. The VA/DoD have issued clinical practice guidelines that are available online as well as other resources for

both patients and healthcare providers. VISN 6 serves about 8.2% of all OEF/OIF veterans. It has a Level 1 (intensive inpatient) and Level 2 (outpatient) center at the Richmond VAMC. Durham, Fayetteville, and Salisbury have Level 3 outpatient centers that support polytrauma. Asheville has a level 4 center that conducts screening.

Ms. Dennis is a registered with an extensive background in research and education. She is a Recovery Support Specialist with the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) covers the states of NC and TN. Mandated in 1991 by Congress, DVBIC is funded by DoD and addresses research, clinical care, and education. DVBIC has sites at the Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg and the Naval Hospital at Camp Lejeune. DVBIC is also associated with the National Intrepid Center of Excellence in Fayetteville. Intrepid Centers address TBI, PTSD, and pain issues. Ms. Dennis is interested in connecting clients with services in the community. For their clients, DVBIC offers education, advocacy, advice and support; identification of local resources and programs; tracking of symptoms and monitoring of treatment compliance and outcomes; regular follow-up interviews for 24 months; and transitioning the client to another RSS if the client relocates. She briefly discussed the resources, including webinars, that DVBIC offers (<http://dvbic.dcoe.mil/resources>).

Ms. Bilos is the founder of Neuro Community Care. Ms. McAllister, formerly with the Division of MH/DD/SAS, is now working for Neuro Community Care. They provide community-based services and supports for the individual who has suffered a brain injury and family members. They focus on easing the transition as much as possible. Ms. McAllister presented on changes that may occur following a brain injury and the types of services and supports that they may need. They spoke specifically about the Wounded Warrior Project Independence Program, which is designed for OEF/OIF/OND warriors who have sustained a moderate or severe TBI.

Ms. Stein mentioned the NC STRIVE 2015! Conference that 200 administrators, staff, and faculty from higher education throughout the State attended on June 16. The conference was highly successful, and the committee is already planning next year's conference.

Mr. Collins noted that NC Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions recently released the NCWorks mobile app, which is designed to help job seekers find employment. NCWorks has a portal specific to Veterans, that is available on smartphones, tablets, and online (<https://www.ncworks.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>). He encouraged feedback as they want to know how well it is working.

Mr. Bishop announced the MVRC-sponsored networking fair at Hope Community Church, 821 Buck Jones Road, Raleigh (27606) on Friday, August 14 from 9 am to noon. To register, visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mvrc-military-service-provider-fair-tickets-17685087573?ref=enivtefor001&invite=ODE0NzY1OS9jb250YWN0QG15bXZyYy5vcmcvMA%3D%3D&utm_source=eb_email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=inviteformalv2&ref=enivtefor001&utm_term=attend.

Ms. Fitzgerald announced the fourth annual job fair, Recruit-A-Vet Employment Fair, in October. It will be held at Fayetteville Technical Community College in Fayetteville. Congresswoman

Renee Ellmers's office is sponsoring the event for veterans and their families. For more info, contact Ms. Fitzgerald at 910.230.1910 or Pat.Fitzgerald@mail.house.gov. She encouraged participation from attendees.

Mr. Lester reported on a retail manager certification program that the community colleges have been developing. The certification program has been approved and is being sponsored by Zaxby's in Hartnett County. The first cohort of managers, including 12 Veterans, will be starting on July 1. Zaxby's is interested in hiring Veteran managers.

Ms. Rawls reported on the regional office of the VBA in Winston-Salem. Currently, they have 62 homeless claims, which are averaging 66 days. They are receiving about 5000 claims per month and are continuing to see a need in the community. They are averaging about 100 days on claims and hope to reduce the number to 75 days soon.

Both Ms. Rawls and GEN Wilson thanked the speakers for their presentations and everyone for attending. The next meeting of the Governor's Working Group will be on July 23, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm in the Situation Room of Emergency Management at the NC National Guard Joint Force Headquarters. The topic will be business and entrepreneurship opportunities for Veterans.